



ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**ST. HELENS BOROUGH
LOCAL PLAN 2020- 2035**

**Open Space, Sport and Recreation
Background Paper**

February 2021

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This background paper has been prepared, as requested by the Inspectors who have been appointed to examine the St Helens Borough Local Plan 2020-2035, in response to paragraph 38 of the preliminary questions (INSP004). In addition, it will provide evidence for the forthcoming Examination in Public of the St Helens Borough Local Plan 2020-2035 (the SHBLP).
- 1.2 The purpose of this paper on open space, sport and recreation is twofold. Firstly, it is to set out the background of and approach taken towards open space within the SHBLP; and secondly to provide a summary of, and analysis on, the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities across the St Helens Borough Council area.
- 1.3 It is not the purpose of this paper to repeat all the detailed evidence that the Council has relied upon when preparing the SHBLP. This evidence has been separately published and is available on the Council's website. However, where appropriate this document refers to the source of evidence and provides a brief summary or explanation of how the evidence has been considered. Similarly, options which are referred to in the paper are explained further in Developing the Spatial Strategy Background Paper (SD026), and the Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal reports.
- 1.4 This paper briefly summarises:
- the policy context relevant to open space, sport and recreation (see Section 2) and;
 - the current provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities throughout the borough (see Sections 3 and 4).
- 1.5 This paper should be read in conjunction with other evidence base documents. These include:
- St Helens Indoor and Built Sports Facilities Needs Assessment¹, (June 2016);
 - St Helens Indoor and Built Sports Facilities Needs Assessment - Golf Course Addendum², (June 2016);
 - St Helens Open Space Assessment³, (June 2016);
 - St Helens Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment Report⁴, (February 2016);
 - St Helens Playing Pitch Strategy & Action Plan⁵, (July 2016).

¹ Document reference: OPE001

² Document reference: OPE002

³ Document reference: OPE003

⁴ Document reference: OPE004

⁵ Document reference: OPE005

2. Policy Context

- 2.1 The following outlines the policy framework at the national level in which the Local Plan is being prepared, in particular, the policy framework that is of relevance to open space, sport and recreation.

National

National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019)

- 2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- 2.3 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF states that in order to achieve the social objective of delivering sustainable development, the planning system should deliver a *"well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being"*.
- 2.4 Furthermore, NPPF paragraph 8 states that *"protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environments"* is an essential component to achieving sustainable development from an environmental perspective.
- 2.5 Therefore, it is evident that a collective approach is required to ensure the delivery of sustainable development is achieved in line with the NPPF (2019).
- 2.6 The importance of achieving the NPPF (2019) social and environmental objectives regarding the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities is further illustrated in paragraph 20 of the NPPF. This paragraph states that *"Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for:*
- a) ...Leisure development;*
 - c) Community facilities;*
 - d) Conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure"*.
- 2.7 Therefore, the above demonstrates that there is an expectation that development will deliver positive outcomes regarding the provision of new and protection of, as well as enhancement of existing open space, sport and recreation facilities, as justified by evidence.
- 2.8 Chapter 8 of the NPPF focusses upon how national policy intends to facilitate the creation of healthy and safe communities. Within this chapter, paragraphs 96 to 98 signifies the importance of open space and recreation in achieving healthy communities, including the need for planning policies to be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of need, as well as seeking to avoid the loss of existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, subject to a number of criteria.

Planning Practice Guidance: Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space (March 2014)

- 2.9 In addition to the NPPF (2019), planning practice guidance has also been produced relating to open space, sport and recreation. This specific guidance supports national policy and provides further guidance relating to issues such as Duty to Cooperate.
- 2.10 Following on from the above, paragraph 001⁶ and 003⁷ outlines the requirement for local planning authorities to have regard for NPPF (2019) paragraphs 24-27 relating to Duty to Cooperate and the requirement to liaise with neighbouring authorities and other statutory organisations including Sport England.
- 2.11 This guidance also highlights the necessity for planning proposals to consider the provision of new open space, sport and recreational facilities within new developments as well as the effects that any proposal would have on existing provision. PPG paragraph 003⁸ outlines specifically when Sport England should be or are advised to be consulted by local planning authorities in relation to proposed development proposals.

⁶ Reference ID: 37-001-20140306

⁷ Reference ID: 37-003-20140306

⁸ Reference ID: 37-003-20140306

3. St Helens Borough Open Space, Sport and Recreation: Overview

- 3.1 It is apparent that open space, sport and recreation facilities are dispersed across the entire area of St Helens Borough. This can be seen visual by reviewing the St Helens Local Plan 2020-2035 Submission Draft Policies Map, 2019 (SD002).
- 3.2 Additionally, appendix 1 further outlines whether each open space typology listed in the reasoned justification to Policy LPC05 (paragraph 7.3.3) is present on a borough ward-level.
- 3.3 An initial observation of appendix 1, indicates that each ward within the Borough of St Helens contains multiple forms of open space typologies therefore enabling access for all individuals to partake in active forms of recreation such as walking, cycling and team sports including rugby, football, tennis etc.
- 3.4 However, it should be acknowledged that even though there is a large provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities across the St Helens Borough, the Open Space Assessment (2016) indicates that the current provision of some open space typologies is below recommended standards. Furthermore, deficiency and surplus regarding the provision of open space typologies in relation to recommended standards differs between each ward within St Helens.
- 3.5 Chapter 4 provides further detailed analysis of open space at a Borough wide level and in specific localities. Any deficiencies in open space and sports and recreation facilities will also be highlighted.

4. St Helens Borough Open Space, Sport and Recreation: Analysis

- 4.1 This section of the paper, aims to provide an analysis of each of the open space typologies listed in Policy LPC05 paragraph 7.3.3.

Parks and Gardens

- 4.2 St Helens Borough has 16 classified park and garden sites, totaling 135ha. The Open Space Assessment (2016) identified that three wards (Blackbrook, Haydock and Rainford) had no formal parks and gardens provision. However, it should be acknowledged that these areas are served by other types of open space such as natural and semi natural greenspace, amenity greenspace and provision for children and young people which, whilst not comprising 'parks' provision, offered access to similar recreational activities to those typically provided by parks.
- 4.3 The largest park in St Helens is Sherdley Park which is located in the Open Space Assessment (2016) West Park and Thatto Heath analysis area and provides access to a wide range of uses and benefits. Other large parks include Taylor Park (19ha) and Victoria Park (13.6ha).
- 4.4 The Open Space Assessment (2016) concludes that "*overall St. Helens is meeting the 0.8ha per 1,000 population quantity standard suggested for parks and gardens*". In addition, as "*all parks are assessed as being of high value*" (see appendix 3) and easily accessible to a wide proportion of the St Helens population this has enabled "*high social inclusion and health benefits, ecological value and [a] sense of place*" to be achieved.
- 4.5 The above is supported and indicated in Appendix 2 as the Open Space Assessment (2016) states that "*most park sites in St. Helens, with the exception of four sites, score above the threshold for quality against the set criteria*".

Natural and Semi-natural Greenspaces

- 4.6 Natural and Semi-Natural Green space in St Helens includes trees and woodlands, scrub, grasslands and wetlands. The emerging Local Plan seeks to recognise, protect and enhance these key assets. These spaces provide key wildlife habitats and corridors and, in some cases, form important recreational resources.
- 4.7 According to the Open Space Assessment (2016), provision of natural and semi-natural greenspaces equates to 626ha. Appendix 1 indicates that the wards of Parr, Sutton and Bold in the South of St Helens Borough has the highest amount natural and semi-natural greenspaces (10.01ha per 1000 population). In regards to all other wards in St Helens, provision of natural and semi-natural greenspace is relatively similar, fluctuating slightly above and below 2ha per 1000 population. Resultantly and supported by the Open Space Assessment (2016) the provision of natural and semi-natural greenspaces is achieving the average quantity provision standard of 2ha.

- 4.8 In regard to the quality of existing natural and semi-natural greenspaces, the Open Space Assessment (2016) identified that 50 assessed sites scored above the threshold value of 35% for this specific open space typology. On the other hand, there were 14 assessed sites that scored below the threshold value of 35%.
- 4.9 Similarly to the above, the Open Space Assessment (2016) indicates that the majority of existing natural and semi-natural greenspaces (56 out of 60 assessed sites) have a value above the threshold standard of 20%.

Amenity Greenspace

- 4.10 The Open Space Assessment (2016) identified 87 amenity green space sites across the Borough with a total area of 164.83 ha. The highest provision (63.76ha) is in the ward areas of Parr, Sutton and Bold. Indicated in appendix 1, this is the only area whereby provision of amenity greenspace is above the recommended standard. However, the Open Space Assessment (2016) does indicate that accessibility issues are evident regarding amenity greenspace in Parr, Sutton and Bold. Rainford has the lowest quantity of amenity greenspace with only 0.28ha per 1000 population.
- 4.11 Appendix 2 illustrates that more than two-thirds (60 sites) of all amenity greenspaces that were assessed in the Open Space Assessment (2016) are considered to have a quality above the standard threshold of the study.
- 4.12 Overall, the Open Space Assessment (2016) concludes that there is “*No issues regarding a deficiency in amenity greenspace*”.

Provision for children and young people (including equipped play areas)

- 4.13 The Open Space Assessment (2016) identified 74 sites equating to 9.35ha across the Borough that had play provision for children and young people, with a high proportion of the Local Equipped area for Play (LEAP) sized play areas being of a high quality.
- 4.14 Appendix 1 illustrates that proportionally Eccleston, Windle, Earlestown, Newton and Rainford wards have the highest amount of provision per 1,000 residents. For the purpose of this background paper, to enable an assessment of provision levels across the whole of St Helens, an average of all assessment area provision has been calculated and is applied as the recommended standard. Resultantly, it can be said that ward areas including Billinge and Seneley Green, Parr, Sutton, Bold, Rainhill, West Park and Thatto have lower than average provision of open space for children and young people (see appendix 1). The report suggests that St Helens lacks provision for older children.
- 4.15 In regard to the quality of existing open space provision for children and young people, the Open Space Assessment (2016) indicates that 67 out of a total of 74 assessed sites have a quality above the threshold standard of 50% (see appendix 3). There were only 7 sites identified to have a quality below

the recommended threshold value.

- 4.16 Similarly to the above, all except one of the assessed sites was considered to be of value within the Open Space Assessment (2016) report. This site is located in Open Space Assessment (2016) report study area Moss Bank and Town Centre.

Allotments

- 4.17 There are 18 allotment sites across St Helens. There are 12 Council managed allotment sites, three self-managed allotment sites and three private allotment sites.
- 4.18 There is a significantly uneven distribution of allotments across the Borough. Large areas such as Parr, Sutton and Newton-le-Willows have good access to allotments but many wards, specifically Billinge and Seneley Green, Haydock, Blackbrook and Rainhill do not have easy access to any allotments, with only one self-managed and two private allotments sited in the north of the Borough.
- 4.19 There are currently a limited number of vacant plots, with a waiting list for all the sites (nine of which have large numbers of 10 or more). An additional 213 plots have been created since January 2015 by splitting some of the larger plots in half. The waiting list in 2015 was 607, and the current waiting list is 301 (minus self-managed sites). The length of the waiting lists in some areas suggests that there is a need for additional plots to be provided in the future as and when opportunities arise. There is scope to provide additional allotments through the provision of public open space as required by Policy LPC05: Open Space of the emerging Local Plan.
- 4.20 According to the Open Space Assessment (2016) the majority of allotments (15 out of 18 assessed sites) exceed the quality threshold and therefore provide a good environment for users.
- 4.21 In addition, all assessed sites are considered to be above the threshold in terms of value (see appendix 3).

Cemeteries and Churchyards

- 4.22 The Borough of St Helens contains 19 sites classified as cemeteries, with a combined area of 48 hectares (ha). St Helens Council is responsible for the management and maintenance of the two largest cemeteries, namely St Helens Cemetery and Crematorium (located in Windle ward) and Newton-le-Willows Cemetery.
- 4.23 The Bereavement Services department of St Helens Council has indicated that remaining capacity is sufficient to meet needs over a period of about 15 years at Newton Cemetery and 25 years at St Helens Cemetery. St Helens Cemetery and Crematorium has recently had a new extension. The figures suggest that Newton-le-Willows Cemetery will be full for Cremation plots in 2033 and full for full depth burial plots in 2029. Based on the current rate of usage St Helens Cemetery would become full in 2043. Whilst the wards of

West Park and Thatto Heath wards have no cemetery provision, there is otherwise a fairly even distribution of provision across the Borough according to the Open Space Assessment (2016). Having regard to these figures, it is considered that there is sufficient burial capacity to meet needs over much of the Plan period. However, there is a need to monitor demand and capacity so that any resultant need for additional burial provision may be addressed.

- 4.24 Overall, there is a high quality and high value of cemeteries and churchyards provision across the borough of St Helens.

Outdoor Sport and Recreation Facilities

- 4.25 The St Helens Indoor and Built Sports Facilities Needs Assessment, Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment and Action Plan were all completed in 2016.
- 4.26 The St Helens Indoor and Built Sports Facilities Needs Assessment (2016) focuses on the provision of sports hall, swimming pools, health and fitness suites, squash courts and athletics facilities. An addendum report specifically focused upon golfing provision within St Helens Borough was also published in 2016. A summary of the current distribution for each specific indoor-sport provision is provided below. In addition, a summary of the St Helens Indoor and Built Sports Facilities Needs Assessment (2016) is provided in appendix 4.

Sports Halls

- 4.27 The St Helens Indoor and Built Sports Facilities Needs Assessment (2016) states that St Helens has 22 sports halls which have a relatively even distribution across the borough.

Swimming Pools

- 4.28 The St Helens Indoor and Built Sports Facilities Needs Assessment (2016) states that St Helens has 4⁹ swimming pools that are widely accessible for residents of St Helens however there is unmet demand that is not being met by existing provision. It is also evident from the report that many wards within St Helens do not have a swimming pool facility, particularly those located in northern areas of the borough including Rainford, Moss Bank and Billinge & Seneley Green.

Health and Fitness Suites

- 4.29 The St Helens Indoor and Built Sports Facilities Needs Assessment (2016) states that in St Helens Borough there are 14 locations mainly located within central areas of St Helens that provide health and fitness suites. Rural areas to the north and south of the borough have a low provision of health and fitness suites.

Squash Courts

- 4.30 There are only two locations within the borough of St Helens where squash is

⁹ The report indicates that there is a total supply of 10 swimming pools however only 4 are considered to be accessible for community use by residents of St Helens borough. All other swimming pools are member only facilities.

facilitated. One facility is located within the Town center ward and therefore is in a central location, whilst the other is within the Sutton ward based within a multi-use sport facility.

Athletics Facilities

- 4.31 There is currently only one Athletics track facility within St Helens, located in the ward of Sutton. There is no unmet demand for this sporting provision.

Golf Courses

- 4.32 The St Helens Indoor and Built Sports Facilities Needs Assessment - Golf Addendum (2016) states that there are 18 courses throughout the Borough of St Helens. There are also 2 driving ranges located at courses within St Helens. There is a higher proportion of golf courses located in the western areas of the Borough in comparison to eastern areas. The report further highlights that there is capacity for additional participants at all golf courses within St Helens.
- 4.33 The St Helens Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment and Action Plan (2016) focuses on sports including football, rugby league, rugby union, hockey, tennis, cricket and bowls. A summary of the current distribution of provision for each specific sport is provided below.

Football

- 4.34 According to the St Helens Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment (2016) there are 134 grass football pitches, located throughout the Borough of St Helens. It is evident that there is provision of football pitches for specific age ranges throughout the borough, as each ward has adult and junior sized playing pitches.

Rugby League

- 4.35 According to the St Helens Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment (2016) the Borough of St Helens has 37 rugby league pitches in 24 locations comprising of 31 senior pitches, two junior pitches and four primary pitches. Rainhill is the only ward that has no provision from grass pitches for rugby league purposes.

Rugby Union

- 4.36 There are 7 pitches located at four sites in St Helens in the wards of Rainford, Newton-Le-Willows, West Park and Windle

Hockey

- 4.37 There is provision to enable Hockey in the following ward areas within St Helens, Eccleston, Newton-Le-Willows, Rainford, Sutton and Windle. However, not all sites are currently available for community use.

Cricket

- 4.38 According to the St Helens Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment (2016) “almost half of cricket squares in St. Helens (four) are located in the Eccleston & Windle area, whilst the remainder of provision is relatively evenly spread between five other areas”. The report identifies that there is no cricket provision in the following wards area: Billinge and Seneley Green, Moss Bank,

Town Centre, Thatto Heath and West Park.

Bowling Greens

- 4.39 Distribution of bowling greens is considered to be uneven according to the St Helens Playing Pitch Assessment (2016). Ward areas including Bold, Eccleston, Parr, Sutton and Windle have the highest availability of bowling greens whereas other wards such as Blackbrook, Haydock, Moss Bank and Rainhill have limited provision.

Tennis

- 4.40 Identified in the St Helens Playing Pitch Assessment (2016), there 16 locations within St Helens with provision of tennis facilities. There are 59 tennis courts distributed across the borough of St Helens. Noticeably there is a lack of provision for tennis in the ward areas of Blackbrook, Haydock, Moss Bank and the Town Centre.
- 4.41 Lastly, the Play Pitch Assessment identified a number of issues over a broad range of sports, the findings of which have been summarised in Appendix 5. These findings are also included within Appendix A of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (October 2020) and can be accessed and downloaded via the Local Plan Examination Library page on the Council's website.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 In conclusion, it is evident that the Borough of St Helens has a variety of open space, sport and recreation facilities that are easily accessible for residents of the Borough. Each ward area of St Helens provides residents with opportunities to participate in multiple outdoor activities either as an individual, as part of a group and even as a member of a sports club such as football and rugby.
- 5.2 It is apparent that there are some deficiencies with current provision of open spaces as well as for some sports such as swimming. However, to address any deficiencies, the SHBLP provides a policy framework to enable appropriate open space, sport and recreation provision to be facilitated.
- 5.3 Various policies within the Plan including LPC05 and LPD03 will ensure sufficient provision of open space is achieved within future developments, as appropriate. In addition, these policies will ensure that any proposals that may affect existing provisions of open space are also assessed so that supply is protected from loss and enhanced, as appropriate. Overall, these policies will contribute to the improvement of the overall social and environmental condition of the whole Borough.
- 5.4 Monitoring and reviewing the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities will be imperative to ensure St Helens Council achieves the aim of high quality and well-designed developments that protect and enhance the multi-functional network of green spaces throughout the Borough.
- 5.5 The Local Plan will be continually monitored throughout its duration and with a formal review occurring every five years, there will be opportunities to assess and evaluate policies to ensure that the Local Plan is contributing positively to open space, sport and recreation provision.

Appendix 1: Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision: Quantity Assessment

St Helens Ward Level: Provision - Quantity Assessment

(source of information: OPE003 St Helens Open Space Assessment, June 2016)

Ward	Deficiency						Comments
	Parks and Gardens	Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	Provision for Children and Young People	Allotments	Cemeteries/ Churchyards	
Recommended Standard	0.8	2	0.94*	0.05*	0.025	**	
Billinge & Seneley Green	0.14 (ha per 1000 population)	2.92 (ha per 1000 population)	0.59 (ha per 1000 population)	0.02 (ha per 1000 population)	0 (ha per 1000 population)	3.30 (size in ha)	No allotments
Earlestown & Newton	0.76	2.21	0.77	0.09	0.17	6.24	
Eccleston & Windle	0.77	1.30	0.85	0.11	0.25	28.35	
Haydock & Blackbrook	0	2.63	0.55	0.05	0	1.95	No parks/gardens and allotments
Moss Bank & Town Centre	0.59	1.14	0.94	0.04	0.08	0.89	
Parr, Sutton & Bold	0.38	10.01	1.85	0.03	0.14	5.17	
Rainford	0	1.92	0.28	0.09	0.13	1.07	No parks/gardens
Rainhill	0.01	1.99	0.64	0.03	0	1.03	No allotments
West Park & Thatto Heath	3.18	2.12	0.78	0.03	0.15	0	No cemeteries/churchyards

* Average used as no recommended standard provided

** No average or recommended standard given

Appendix 2: Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision: Quality Assessment

St Helens Ward Level: Provision - Quality Assessment

(source of information: OPE003 St Helens Open Space Assessment, June 2016)

Ward	Deficiency											
	Parks and Gardens*		Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace		Amenity Greenspace		Provision for Children and Young People		Allotments		Cemeteries/ Churchyards	
Threshold	<60%	>60%	<35%	>35%	<40%	>40%	<50%	>50%	<45%	>45%	<45%	>45%
Billinge & Seneley Green	-	1	1	2	3	7	-	4	-	-	-	3
Earlestown & Newton	-	2	1	10	2	7	2	11	-	3	1	3
Eccleston & Windle	-	1	4	5	4	7	2	8	-	2	-	2
Haydock & Blackbrook	-	-	-	5	1	8	-	5	-	-	-	2
Moss Bank & Town Centre	2	3	1	4	3	10	1	10	-	2	-	1
Parr, Sutton & Bold	-	2	6	14	6	11	-	12	-	5	1	3
Rainford	-	-	1	4	2	1	-	4	1	1	-	1
Rainhill	-	1	-	2	2	5	1	4	-	-	-	2
West Park & Thatto Heath	2	2	-	6	4	4	1	9	2	2	-	-
Average	4	12	14	50	27	60	7	67	3	15	2	17

* According to the Open Space Assessment (2016) Parks and Gardens “threshold is 60% to reflect the Green Flag Pass Mark”.

Appendix 3: Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision: Value Assessment

St Helens Ward Level: Provision - Value Assessment

(source of information: OPE003 St Helens Open Space Assessment, June 2016)

Ward	Deficiency											
	Parks and Gardens		Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace		Amenity Greenspace		Provision for Children and Young People		Allotments		Cemeteries/ Churchyards	
Threshold	<20%	>20%	<20%	>20%	<20%	>20%	<20%	>20%	<20%	>20%	<20%	>20%
Billinge & Seneley Green	-	1	1	2	3	7	-	4	-	-	-	3
Earlestown & Newton	-	2	1	9	-	9	-	13	-	3	-	4
Eccleston & Windle	-	1	-	9	3	8	-	10	-	2	-	2
Haydock & Blackbrook	-	-	-	4	1	8	-	5	-	-	-	2
Moss Bank & Town Centre	-	5	-	4	-	13	1	10	-	2	-	1
Parr, Sutton & Bold	-	2	2	19	-	17	-	12	-	5	-	4
Rainford	-	-	-	5	2	1	-	4	-	2	-	1
Rainhill	-	1	-	2	-	7	-	5	-	-	-	2
West Park & Thatto Heath	-	4	-	6	1	7	-	10	-	4	-	-
Total	-	16	4	60	10	77	1	73	-	18	-	19

Appendix 4: Indoor and Built Sports Facilities Provision

Indoor and Built Sports Facilities Provision

(source of information: OPE001 St Helens Indoor and Built Sports Facilities Needs Assessment, June 2016)

	Sports Halls	Swimming Pools	Health and Fitness Suites	Squash Courts	Athletics	Golf Courses
St Helens	22	7.3m ² per 1000 population	576 fitness stations	5 courts	1 track at Sutton Leisure Centre	1 course per 16,350 of population
Comparable Average	2 nd lowest number of sports halls amongst Merseyside authorities	12.2m ² per 1000 population		No comparable average	Marked unsatisfactory by UK Athletics track inspection - Sutton Athletics Track 2014	1 course per 17,311 population
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Of the total population of St. Helens, 94.4% of demand is being met. Of this 71% of this is being met by facilities within St. Helens. This is attributed to the high percentage of residents with access to a car. Of the total demand within St. Helens only 5.6% is not met by the current supply. 5 sports halls are considered below average in terms of quality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only just over half of demand from St. Helens residents (54%) is met by facilities within the Borough. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waiting list has been created for demand. The waiting list is not about the lack of or availability of facilities but is more about developing coaching and volunteer infrastructure to support this development. The facility will need a good level of maintenance to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and needs protecting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> St. Helens has fewer residents per golf course and per hole in comparison with its nearest statistical neighbours and other local authorities on Merseyside. Demand to play golf is declining within the borough and a surplus in provision is identified. The standard of courses, at all sites visited, was found to be good.

Appendix 5: St Helens Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment (2016) Summary

Summary

(source of information: OPE004, St Helens Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment Report, February 2016)

Sport	Findings of the Assessment	Identified Shortfall	Potential Future Delivery
Football (grass pitch)	<p>A total of 134 football pitches are located in the Borough. Of these, 127 are available, at some level, for community use.</p> <p>Approximately 328 teams play on these pitches.</p> <p>Most football pitches available for community use are assessed as being of poor quality (56%) or standard quality (37%), with less than a quarter (7%) assessed as good.</p> <p>There is displaced demand mostly from mini and girls' teams accessing central venues in certain leagues. Rainhill Town FC and St Helens Town FC both export demand due to a reported lack of suitable facilities in the area.</p>	<p>There is current unmet demand of one team at mini level reported by Bleak Hill Rovers JFC.</p> <p>There is a shortfall of youth match sessions at both 9v9 and 11v11 formats to accommodate current and future demand, whilst increases in future demand would cause a shortfall at the mini 5v5 level.</p> <p>If community use is lost at unsecured sites, 20 match equivalents that take place on such pitches would need to be relocated.</p>	<p>The Council has plans to develop Ruskin Drive Sports Ground to include a new 'stadium' pitch on the site, which may be used by St Helens Town FC amongst other clubs.</p> <p>The SDCFL and SRJAFI are investigating the possibility of amalgamation in order to provide a pathway from youth football into adult teams.</p> <p>There is a total of 29.75 match sessions of actual spare capacity across the Borough, of which 22.25 are on adult pitches. There is one mini 5v5 pitch at Bishop Road Playing Fields available for community use but has no recorded play.</p>
Cricket	<p>In total, there are 10 grass cricket squares and five artificial wickets identified in St Helens, all of which are in secured community use, accommodating 50 teams (26 senior and 24 junior teams).</p> <p>Two squares are assessed as good quality (Sutton CC and Rainhill CC) and eight as standard. No squares are assessed as poor.</p>	<p>Ancillary facilities are a key issue to several clubs. Changing room and shower provision is poor at Newton Sports Club and Sutton CC. Car parking is a problem at Rainford.</p> <p>Three sites are overplayed, to a total of 15 match sessions at Haydock CC, Rainhill CC and Rainford CC.</p>	<p>Overplay at Haydock CC is temporary and is not a long-term concern. Otherwise, overplay is considered to be minimal and can be absorbed by current quality of provision.</p> <p>Ruskin Drive Sports Ground is the only Council owned site and is underutilised with a significant amount of</p>

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			<p>spare capacity.</p> <p>There is sufficient capacity within St Helens to accommodate overplay unmet and future demand at the required peak times.</p>
<p>Rugby Union</p>	<p>In total, seven senior rugby union pitches are located across four sites in the Borough, all of which are available for community use. There are no junior or mini pitches.</p> <p>There are four clubs in St Helens, fielding a total of 31 teams. There are nine senior men's' teams, 12 mini teams and ten junior teams, of which two are girls' teams.</p> <p>All pitches are located at sports club sites, with the exception of Ruskin Drive Sports Ground which is managed by the Council.</p> <p>The majority of pitches are assessed as poor quality. Three pitches are assessed as standard quality and none as good.</p>	<p>Newton-le-Willows RFC highlight the changing facilities at Newton Sports Club as poor quality and a key issue. Changing rooms at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground and Liverpool St Helens are also poor.</p> <p>There is no spare capacity at any of the four sites with rugby union pitches.</p> <p>Overall there are insufficient pitches in St Helens to service current and future demand, totalling a future requirement for a further 17.5 match equivalent sessions.</p> <p>A lack of floodlit pitch provision for rugby union (both grass and AGP) is a key contributing factor to overplay in the Borough. More accessible floodlit pitches would allow for greater distribution of training demand and would help reduce existing levels of overuse.</p>	<p>Liverpool St Helens Club is seeking grant funding to make improvements to their changing rooms.</p> <p>The Council has notable plans for the development of the Ruskin Drive Sports Ground site. This would include a new World Rugby Regulation 22 AGP available for training and match play.</p>
<p>Rugby League</p>	<p>There are 37 dedicated rugby league pitches in the Borough (31 senior, two</p>	<p>There is a need for 25.5 match equivalent sessions on senior</p>	<p>Council plans for the development of Ruskin Drive Sports Ground</p>

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	<p>junior and four primary) across 24 sites. All but four pitches are available for community use.</p> <p>Pitches are generally assessed as standard (54%) or poor (43%) quality. Only one pitch at Cowley Language College Playing Fields is assessed as good.</p>	<p>pitches in St Helens in order to accommodate overplay and future demand. The main issue is that almost half of rugby league pitches are poor quality, limiting the recommended capacity.</p> <p>There are enough primary pitches to accommodate current demand but a requirement for an additional 3.5 match sessions to cater for anticipated future demand.</p>	<p>include a new AGP suitable for rugby league training and match play.</p> <p>Clubs generally overuse match pitches and have the attitude that they can be used for training because summer season daylight hours allow. There is also a general reluctance to access AGPs from most clubs which tend to view them as unaffordable.</p>
<p>Hockey</p>	<p>There are five AGPs suitable for competitive hockey within St Helens, of which there are three sand filled and two sand dressed surfaces. Only Sutton Leisure Centre is currently accommodating hockey use.</p> <p>Selwyn Jones Sport Centre is rated as good quality and has recently been resurfaced. The remaining four AGPs are assessed as standard quality.</p> <p>Sutton Leisure Centre AGP is over ten years old and is assessed as standard quality. It would normally be considered for resurfacing, but Prescott HC reports it to be well maintained.</p>	<p>St Helens is adequately provided for with regards to AGPs suitable for hockey matches at present. However, future demand from Prescott HC (which could result in five new teams) would require access to a further pitch for Saturday matches. There is spare capacity for hockey match play at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground and Selwyn Jones Sports Centre; however, this is not ideal for Prescott HC.</p> <p>Generally, there is very limited capacity for hockey training in the evenings due to football bookings.</p>	<p>Rainford High Technology College AGP is unavailable at peak hockey times for competitive use (school policy) and the school is in discussion with Rainford Rangers FC about its possible conversion to a 3G surface in the future (circa five years when the carpet needs resurfacing).</p> <p>De La Salle High School is available at weekends between 9am and 3pm but a lack of floodlighting limits use to two or three hockey games per day in winter.</p> <p>Selwyn Jones Sport Centre is available for hockey matches at weekends but is played to capacity midweek by football usage/training.</p> <p>Plans are in place for Ruskin Drive AGP to be</p>

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<p>Artificial Grass Pitches (AGP)</p>	<p>There are seven AGPs in St Helens made up of two 3G surfaces, and five sand based. There is one FA certified 3G pitch at Rainhill High School Media Arts College.</p> <p>Three of the seven pitches in St Helens are assessed as good quality. Four sites are assessed as standard quality, with no poor quality pitches.</p> <p>In summary, supply and demand analysis (including FPM findings) highlights that St Helens is currently well served for hockey suitable AGPs but 3G pitches are operating at capacity for football training.</p>	<p>The carpet of an AGP usually lasts for approximately 10 years. Pitches at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground and Sutton Leisure Centre are considered to require imminent carpet replacement as both are more than nine years old.</p> <p>The FA estimates that one full size AGP can service 60 teams. On the basis there are 326 teams playing competitive football in St Helens, there is a recommended need for five full size 3G pitches to cater for football demand, currently there are two (this is based on the assumption all teams would be willing to train and play on AGP rather than grass given the opportunity).</p>	<p>resurfaced from sand to 3G.</p> <p>In the main, availability of provision in the peak period is generally good. Where there is provision on education sites, this is generally made available after school and at weekends.</p> <p>There are plans for the construction of a new World Rugby Reg 22 and FA certified 3G at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground to replace the existing pitch. There is also the possibility that the pitch at Rainford High Technology College may be converted to 3G.</p>
<p>Bowling Greens</p>	<p>There are 39 bowling greens in St Helens provided across 34 sites. The majority are located at club sites or pub sites, with ten owned by the Council.</p> <p>Bowling green distribution is not evenly spread throughout St Helens. The Eccleston & Windle area has nine, representing around a quarter of greens in the Borough. Five of the</p>	<p>There are five greens showing evidence of overplay at Vulcan Sports Ground, Birchley St Mary's Parochial Club, Chancery Lane, St Patricks Social Centre and Eccleston BC.</p> <p>St Helens is generally well served for bowling greens at present. The key issue facing bowls clubs is the decrease in playing members and</p>	<p>There are plans for the development of a new green at Vulcan Sports Ground to provide for the loss of the existing green to housing development. However, this will not be sufficient to accommodate the existing overplay.</p> <p>Plans for the Council redevelopment of Ruskin Drive Sports Ground include the resurfacing of</p>

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	<p>nine analysis areas have two greens or fewer.</p> <p>The number of greens in St Helens has decreased in recent years. Eleven greens have been lost, including seven at Council owned sites; Ruskin Drive Sports Ground, Victoria Park and Queens Park Recreation Ground.</p> <p>All greens in the Borough are assessed as good (76%) or Average (24%) quality.</p> <p>There is a general perception that the quality and maintenance of privately/club owned and maintained greens are of a better standard than greens at pub sites. This is likely to be due to cost of upkeep or a lack of equipment and knowledge of maintenance.</p> <p>There are 40 clubs using bowling greens in St Helens. Generally, clubs in St Helens report that membership levels have either remained static or decreased in the last three years due to aging players. Only Vulcan BC cites a planned increase in teams and membership.</p>	<p>sports development factors rather than a lack of accessible facilities.</p>	<p>the two existing greens and a new shared changing facility.</p>
Tennis	<p>There is a total of 59 tennis courts provided in St Helens across 16 sites, three of which provide floodlit courts. Provision can be found on a range of sites including sports clubs and parks. There are 20 courts</p>	<p>Of particular concern is the current poor quality of courts at Ruskin Drive Sports Ground which is affecting usage and subsequent membership at Ruskin Park TC.</p>	<p>There are four tennis clubs located in St Helens. Rainford TC and Ruskin Park TC suggest they have development plans or aspirations to improve current facilities, including the Council redevelopment</p>

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	<p>across Council managed sites.</p> <p>In addition, there are six secondary schools providing 25 courts, 11 of which are available to the community, located at Hope Academy and Rainford High Technology College.</p> <p>A total of 26 courts (44%) are assessed as good quality and 14 courts (24%) assessed as average quality. The remaining 19 courts (32%) are assessed as poor quality.</p>	<p>Although there is adequate number of courts in St Helens, poor quality is restricting access and is the priority to address. A lack of floodlights also appears to be limiting court usage on some sites.</p>	<p>of Ruskin Park Sports Ground to provide five or six new tennis courts.</p>
<p>Golf Courses</p>	<p>There are eight 18 hole and one 9 hole golf courses in the Borough. These can theoretically accommodate 4,650 adult 7 day / full members.</p> <p>Courses in St Helens are considered good or very good although the ancillary facilities can vary. Sherdley Park is considered to have the weakest of the ancillary facilities.</p>	<p>The Sport England segmentation data identifies circa 6,596 potential and existing golfers in St Helens which would indicate an under supply of golf courses in St Helens (based on assumption all current potential golfers actually took part in the sport). However, only one golf course in the Borough indicated it had a waiting list.</p>	<p>Demand for golf and, in particular, membership of a golf club has fallen significantly over the past decade according to Sport England and England Golf. Consultation undertaken in St Helens confirms that most clubs in the Borough are following this trend.</p> <p>At the same time as the fall in general membership, there has been a rise in 'Nomads', i.e. golfers who like to play golf but are not interested in affiliating to the NGB, obtaining a CONGU handicap or joining a golf club preferring instead to play a variety of courses, mostly in good weather with friends and family, taking advantage of offers and discounts to play off-peak.</p> <p>The population in St</p>

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			<p>Helens is projected to rise by 7.5% by 2037. Given the current spare capacity on golf courses in St Helens, this rise is unlikely to lead to a rise in the demand for more courses, but rather current courses will be able to accommodate it.</p>
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